

YPSILANTI AREA SESQUICENTENNIAL-150 YEARS

YPSILANTI AREA SESQUICENTENNIAL

1823-1973



A COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET PUBLISHED

BY THE SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 26, 1973

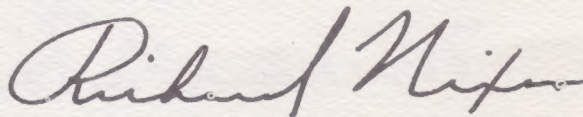
TO THE PEOPLE OF
YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

It is a welcome opportunity for me to join in celebrating the 150th anniversary of Ypsilanti, Michigan.

The first settlers to Ypsilanti brought with them a spirit of enthusiasm, determination, and cooperation -- qualities which not only have helped to build a community with rich heritage, but also have contributed to the growth and prosperity of the United States as a great nation.

America has many assets as we look toward our nation's 200th birthday and high among them in the strong and vital seeds of success that were planted in your community of Ypsilanti.

You have my best wishes for the future.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Richard Nixon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "R" and "N".



STATE OF MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

LANSING

WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN
GOVERNOR

April 10, 1973

Ypsilanti Area Sesquicentennial
Ypsilanti, Michigan

Greetings:

I am very pleased to both personally and officially join in the celebration in recognition of Ypsilanti's 150th year.

Your community represents the best of Michigan, a state which is rich in tradition, generated by strong, dedicated people over the past many decades.

The events which are so important and historic in Ypsilanti's history are well outlined in this booklet and deserve the careful consideration of each of you.

As the years of history have presented challenge and opportunity to people of the past, the future presents to us and those who follow us, both opportunity and challenge.

I am certain that with the tradition, such as we find in Ypsilanti, this community and this state can look to a most productive and bright future in the decades ahead.

May 1973 and this 150th celebration be a year and an occasion which you will never forget.

Sincerely,

William G. Milliken

Governor



CITY OF YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

CITY COUNCIL

304 NORTH HURON STREET
YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN 48197

April 10, 1973

Ypsilanti, since its inception in 1833, as a Chartered Village, has carried with it the personality and distinction of a name in which we can all take pride.

We have moved from a Trading Post Community, called Woodruff's Grove, to a City which has developed into a community of pride.

Schools, parks, homes, churches, historic buildings, shops and a diversified population are the ingredients that make our community great.

As we celebrate our 150th Anniversary, let us take this opportunity to recall our esteemed past and prepare for an even more prosperous future.

The opportunity for retrospect and reflection comes too rarely, and as we give remembrance and thanks to our forefathers for their efforts, let us also resolve to leave our community just a little better than we found it. In the words of Shakespeare, "The past is but the prologue to the future".

We invite you to visit our community and discover for yourselves why we call it "HOME".

George D. Goodman
Mayor
City of Ypsilanti

"WHERE COMMERCE AND EDUCATION MEET"

YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP

OFFICE OF
BILL GAGNON
SUPERVISOR

TOWNSHIP BUILDING
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2-2821

Greetings:

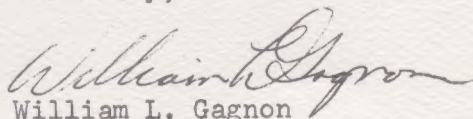
It gives me great pleasure to welcome friends, guests and visitors to the Greater Ypsilanti area during this, the 150th anniversary of the founding of our municipality.

In the past century and a half, Ypsilanti has grown from a backwoods outpost on the midwestern frontier to a thriving center where education, commerce and industry work hand in hand in the best interest of the community. Ypsilanti residents have demonstrated spirit, determination and cooperation, both in the way they have developed and maintained their own community and in the atmosphere of competition that exists between Ypsilanti and neighboring municipalities.

We, in Ypsilanti, have much to be proud of and the upcoming sesquicentennial celebration affords us the opportunity to express our pride, as well as the confidence we have in the future of our town. During the festivities, we will be able to relive bits and pieces of the history and tradition of our community. But, as we celebrate the past, we should also cast an eye upon the future, looking forward to the further growth and development of Ypsilanti. There can be little doubt that we shall grow and prosper, maintaining our place as a model community, rivaling any other in the state.

Let us all enjoy a safe and very memorable sesquicentennial celebration in the same way that we worked to build the community. That is, together.

Sincerely,


William L. Gagnon
Supervisor
Ypsilanti Township

YPSILANTI AREA SESQUICENTENNIAL, INC.

1823 June 30 - July 8, 1973

Post Office Box 1823

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

Telephone 487-5626

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Greetings!

We are very pleased on behalf of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of the Ypsilanti Area Sesquicentennial to welcome you to the Ypsilanti Area for this historic celebration. We particularly hope that our visitors and guests will fondly remember the activities and return often to visit us.

In reading this historic booklet you will observe the names of the hundreds of Ypsilanti Area citizens who have worked together to make this celebration one that will not be soon forgotten. Our heartfelt thanks goes to these dedicated and loyal people - people without whom our festivities would not have been possible.

Our City and our Township leaders who have worked hand-in-glove with us to assure the success of our birthday party merit recognition and our many thanks. Also we would like to thank our investors - those who believed enough in our project at the outset to put money into it.

To all of you who have made our task so pleasant and who have given us reason to be proud not only of our ancestors but also our fellow citizens, we express our gratitude.

Sincerely yours,

THE YPSILANTI AREA SESQUICENTENNIAL, INC.

By *Marcia*
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General Co-Chairman

John
John N. Kirkendall
General Co-Chairman

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TO THE READER

This booklet presents some of the highlights of the history of the Ypsilanti Area. We hope that it will encourage the reader to take advantage of the historical materials available in the Ypsilanti Area, particularly the information catalogued in the Ypsilanti Historical Museum.

The Book Committee would like to express their appreciation to all who have contributed to the publication of this booklet. We are particularly indebted to Richard and Barbara Fairfield, Mary and James Baker, Tom Tobias and members of the Ypsilanti Historical Museum staff, for so willingly giving their time and efforts making this publication possible.

Gary and Carolyn Navarre

Gary and Carolyn Navarre

CO-CHAIRMEN, BOOK COMMITTEE

THE HISTORY OF YPSILANTI 150 YEARS

Written By:

Thomas N. Tobias, Jr.

Mary Wallace Baker

Barbara A. Fairfield

For the

*Sesquicentennial Anniversary
of the Ypsilanti Area.*

THE BEGINNING . . .

*They came upon a level plain
abundant with tall oak trees
stretching across the horizon.*

*Benjamin Woodruff, one of the
settlers, liked what he saw.*

*They built crude homes from logs
and the settlement was called,
"Woodruff's Grove."*

It was the spring of 1823.

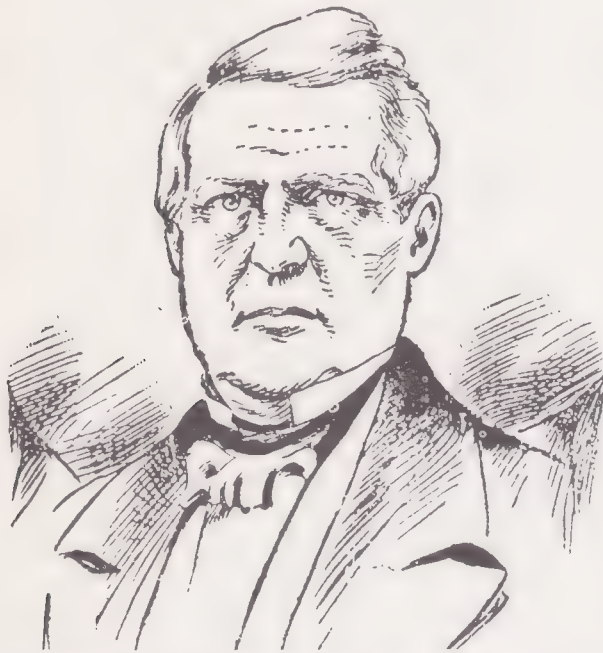
Ypsilanti began to stir.

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS 1823-1873

by Thomas N. Tobias, Jr.

Ypsilanti had changed very little before Woodruff's arrival from Sandusky, Ohio, in the 19th century. A vast forest covered most of the land. A river wound its way through rugged countryside where deer, bears and wolves roamed. Indians in search of game trampled over crude paths.

At one time Ypsilanti was a small plot in a huge parcel of land called the Northwest Territory. By 1805, it became part of the Michigan Territory. Four years later, three Frenchmen, Gabriel Godfroy, Francois Pepin and Romaine La Chambre built an unpretentious Indian fur-trading post on the west bank of the Huron River. For some time, the Godfroy Trading Post, as it was called, was the only log structure in Washtenaw County. Because of various treaties which forced the Indians to move westward, the trading post soon lost its customers and eventually disappeared.



Gabriel Godfroy. One of three men who established the first trading post here in 1809.

In September, 1819, General Lewis Cass, Governor of the Michigan Territory, signed the Treaty of Saginaw. As a result, the future Washtenaw County passed forever out of Indian possession and the land was offered for sale to the public. This was the magnet that was to draw Benjamin Woodruff to the "Grove" in 1823.

Woodruff's Grove struggled to survive. The settlers fought the land, the weather, the malarial scourge and, on occasion, each other. By 1825, the young settlement's dream

of becoming a pioneering mecca was shattered when surveyors began to work on a road which would link Detroit and Chicago. This road, which later became Michigan Avenue, was later constructed nearly a mile north of the Grove.



Dedicating the Woodruff's Grove Historical Marker at the corner of Prospect and Grove Streets—1923.

About 1825, Judge August Brevoort Woodward of Detroit, John Stewart and William Harwood shrewdly bought acres of land near Woodruff's Grove and platted it for a village. All the village needed was a name. Few world events of the time captured the sympathy and fancy of the American public as did the Greek struggle for independence from Turkey. Stories of the heroism of Demetrius Ypsilanti, a Greek General, so impressed Judge Woodward that he suggested the village be called "Ypsilanti." Generations have been mispronouncing and misspelling the name ever since.

Settlers began to trickle into the new village almost immediately. They were hardy people who cleared the land for farming, built reasonably comfortable homes, made roads which were little more than paths, opened stores and mills, and tried gallantly to maintain some kind of law and order.

The first storekeeper was Jonathan Morton. His store was located on the northwest corner of Huron and Pearl Streets. In 1825, the property cost him about \$110.

A political convention was held that same year to nominate county officers. The delegates from Woodruff's Grove were Benjamin Woodruff and Thomas Sackridge. The village of Ypsilanti sent Dr. Rufus Pomeroy. Benjamin Woodruff was nominated for the office of sheriff.

In the spring of 1826, a meeting was held at the Grove to form a militia organization. Its purpose was to protect the scattered settlers from roving bands of Indians.

Education in the 1820's was dependent upon the charity of private citizens. The first school in Ypsilanti was said

to have been opened by Olive Gorton. The school was held in a house built on the west bank of the Huron River. Since there was no bridge spanning the river at that time, children who lived on the east side were rowed across morning and night by Miss Gorton. For this and teaching, she received a weekly salary of \$2.

By 1830, the first brick house was built by Judge Jacob L. Larzelere on the southwest corner of South Huron and Woodward Streets. The Judge also had a sawmill erected near the site later chosen for the Cornwell Mill. The Judge's sawmill was converted into a paper mill in 1842, and later it became a felt-woolen mill.

William Harwood, concerned for the education of the children, built the first schoolhouse in Ypsilanti. The school was opened in 1831 and Miss Laura Vail was hired as the teacher.



First Ypsilanti school built by William Harwood—about 1830.

An ad appearing in the September 8, 1831, issue of the *Detroit Free Press* announced:

"Two stage lines are now running from Detroit to Ann Arbor, Jacksonburg, and Tecumseh via Ypsilanti."

An Act of the Legislature in 1832 enabled the tiny Ypsilanti settlement to become a village, and on September 3rd a meeting of all voters was held for the purpose of organization. The first village officers elected at this meeting were John Gilbert, President; E.M. Skinner, Recorder; Ario Pardee, Treasurer; and five Trustees. Ypsilanti was the second settlement in Michigan to become a village.

In 1832, cholera raged in Detroit and became a grave concern to Ypsilanti. To check the disease, an Act was passed by the Legislature to prevent immigrants or travellers from entering communities. This Act was to be enforced by the local militia. Because of the overly protective attitude of the Ypsilanti Company, the village got the reputation of being dangerous. Even the Governor of the Michigan Territory hesitated to enter. There were no recorded cholera deaths in Ypsilanti, however, for that year.

An attempt to improve shipping on the Huron River was made by Hiram and James Ashe in 1833. Their flatboat, christened "The Enterprise," made several trips to and from Detroit, but the venture proved unprofitable.

Although Ypsilanti was struggling and slowly expanding, the surrounding countryside was not always tranquil. This is perhaps best illustrated by the following incident recorded in the *History of Washtenaw County*:

"In November, 1833, the celebrated meteoric showers (or falling stars as they were commonly called) occurred and a man living just east of the Ypsilanti plains happened to be up and saw it. Thinking that the end of the world was certainly at hand, he made a beeline for the tavern. About half the way there he met a drove of wolves on the road. When the wolves began to howl the man became even more frightened. The noise he and the wolves made aroused the neighborhood. The wolves finally vacated the road and the man got to the tavern where it is presumed he felt much safer."

In 1834, Isaac Kimball and Harry Gilbert discovered a mysterious underground room not far from Prospect Street. The room was about ten feet square and eight feet high. Legend has it that the room was used by counterfeiters in the early days of the Godfrey Trading Post.

A cavalry troop from Ypsilanti was mobilized in 1835 to fight in the comedic "Toledo War." Enraged when Ohio claimed Toledo, Michigan gave the call to arms and the Ypsilanti troop, joined by a contingency from Ann Arbor, marched bravely to battle. Fortunately, two commissioners from Washington had arrived on the scene. The Governors of Michigan and Ohio were persuaded to discuss the matter, using means other than force. The war was called off, and the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor cavalry unit trudged wearily back home. Settlement of the dispute took a long time, but Congress eventually awarded Toledo to Ohio and gave Michigan the entire Upper Peninsula.

The Detroit and Chicago Road was finally opened in 1835, but traveling was a slow and tough job. That same year, the tax roll for the Village of Ypsilanti listed 121 taxpayers. The largest tax paid was \$86.50. The smallest amount was 7½ cents paid on a cow.

Ypsilantians were not always shy about expressing their views to prominent political figures. On the night of October 25, 1835, John Scott Horner, unpopular Governor of the Michigan Territory, stopped overnight in the village. During the night, his lodging place was pelted with stones and other missiles. Governor Horner left the village quietly the next morning.

Ypsilanti's first venture into the banking business came in 1836. On March 28th of that year, the State Legislature passed a special Act chartering the Bank of Ypsilanti. After being incorporated by eight men, the bank operated for three years. When the management changed, bankruptcy soon followed. Wildcat banking was not uncommon during the 1830's, and many unscrupulous individuals took advantage of making a fast buck. Eventually, the business community of Ypsilanti took a firm grasp on the situation and booted the speculators out of town.

One of the deaths recorded in 1837 was that of Benjamin Woodruff. The exact date has been variously reported but many believe that it was on October 18th. Woodruff was buried in Forest Hill Cemetery in Ann Arbor. In 1906, the Daughters of the American Revolution marked his grave.

Ypsilanti's first newspaper began printing in 1837. The publication, called *The Ypsilanti Republican*, was largely devoted to poems, stories and other miscellaneous read-

ing matter. The paper folded after 18 months as a result of a dispute between the editor, John W. Wallace, and the stockholders.

One of the most significant events to happen in the Ypsilanti Area occurred in the late 1830's. After three unsuccessful attempts to bring the railroad to Washtenaw County, the Legislature granted a charter to the Detroit-St. Joseph Railroad. This railroad company had plans for a daring project which would connect the headwaters of Lake Erie with Lake Michigan. Unfortunately, the company made little progress. In 1837, the State bought out the company and changed the name of the railroad to the "Central Road." The actual work of building the rails was seriously begun, and the road to Ypsilanti was completed in January, 1838. By the following month the train was rolling.



Michigan Central Depot—1865.

To guard against lawlessness and terror that swept Ypsilanti in the late 1830's, a Vigilante Society was created. After two meetings, an Ypsilanti Vigilante Committee was organized with some of the strongest citizens of the town as active members. The meetings were held in absolute secrecy. The Committee's methods of handling shady characters were very impressive, and there is no record that these steps were violent or illegal. By the end of 1839, 112 men had been convicted of crimes, hundreds of dollars in stolen goods were recovered, and many undesirables were asked to leave town.

Ypsilanti retained its rugged pioneer look well into the 1840's. Most stores and homes were made from timber, although a few stone and brick buildings began to sprout. The village was surrounded by clumps of dense forests,

rolling hills and marshy tracts of land. Roads were often impassable.

One of the most significant stories to come out of the 1840's was the development of public education in Ypsilanti. It probably began when Francis Griffin used a meeting room in the Presbyterian Church for a school. His school was later relocated in a four-storied building called "The Nunnery." The school was successful for a time, but soon disappeared. Following Griffin was a man named Landreth. His attempts at maintaining an academic school which specialized in Latin and Greek also failed.

In Landreth's employ was an ambitious young man named Charles Woodruff who took over Landreth's floundering school. Woodruff improved the school's quarters by moving out of the Larzelere Block into the old Tecumseh Hotel. The school continued at this location until the hotel was sold to a company headed by Reverend L. H. Moore. It was Moore's hope to establish a school under the name of "Ypsilanti Seminary." Charles Woodruff left the school about this time and later became editor of the village newspaper.

During this era, schools were largely supported by charity and built by a few interested citizens. Only the well-to-do sent their children. It was through the efforts of a few men on the village school board that Ypsilanti residents were made aware of their responsibility to educate all the area children. It was the idea of the school board to buy the Tecumseh Hotel for a district school and to have the public share in the purchase of it.

Changes were made in the building, and the new school opened its doors in October, 1849. The "Model School," as it was called, was very popular among the young people. The upper floors were turned into dormitories which were occupied by out-of-town students. Discipline was harsh. A bell rang for rising and retiring. All lights were out by 10 p.m., and the students could not leave the building during study hours without a pass. The Model School was said to have been the first "graded" school in Michigan, and the name was eventually changed to "Union Seminary."

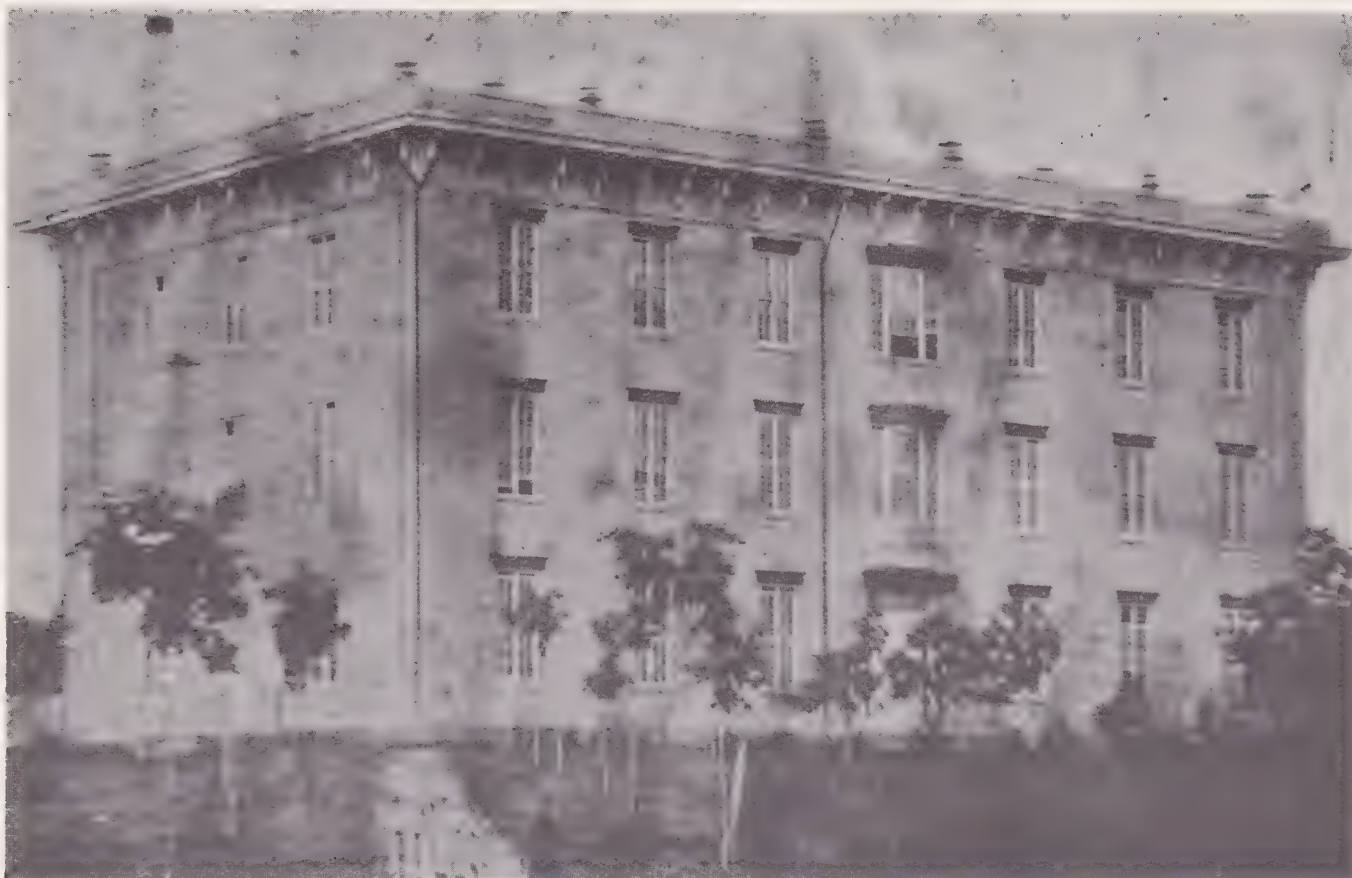
The *Sentinel*, another of Ypsilanti's early newspapers, began to run off the press in 1844. The Whig Party and the candidacy of Henry Clay for President of the United States were responsible for this publication. After the Whig Party suffered defeat, the paper found itself without enough financial support. The owners, realizing the town needed a newspaper, sought out the help of Charles Woodruff. It was Woodruff who pumped new life into the press and continued its publication for many years.

Ypsilanti's first cemetery was located at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Summit Streets. It was unfenced until 1847. About 150 bodies were buried there. The village's second cemetery was laid out where Prospect Park now stands. In 1842 or 1843, the property cost was about \$200. At that time, townspeople thought it was so far removed that the village would never reach it. Over 1000 people are said to have been buried there.

The birth of Michigan State Normal College (Eastern Michigan University) in 1849 was to have far-reaching effects on the development and growth of the Ypsilanti Area. It began in 1837 when John Pierce, Michigan's first Superintendent-

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The first building at Michigan State Normal College (Eastern Michigan University). Erected in 1852 and destroyed by fire October 28, 1859.

ent of Public Instruction, urged the State Legislature to establish a school for training teachers. In 1849, an Act was passed which stated, in part, that a suitable site would be chosen by the State Board of Education for the location of the school. In addition, 25 sections of "salt-spring land" would be sold to help provide funds. The expense for construction of buildings and equipment was to be borne by the community where the school was located. Several communities immediately became interested. Among them were Jackson, Marshall, Miles and Gull Prairie. Through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. John Starkweather and other prominent citizens, the State Board of Education was persuaded to choose Ypsilanti.

After Ypsilanti was selected, construction of the first building got underway. It was a three-storied structure and cost \$15,200 when completed in 1852. Professor Adonijah Strong Welch became the school's first principal. The first term began in 1853 with approximately 122 students enrolled. To be admitted, a male had to be 18 and a female had to be 16. A written statement of intent to teach in the schools of Michigan was also required. The 1850's, 60's and '70's were years of experimentation, organization and expansion for the young school. Michigan State Normal College was the first teacher training school west of the Alleghenies and was, for 50 years, the only "normal" college in Michigan.

Public sentiment against slavery began to mount in the

early 1850's and with it came the "Underground Railroad." The Railroad consisted of a network of sympathizers who helped southern slaves escape into the north or Canada. Since the entire operation depended upon absolute secrecy, those Ypsilantians who did participate in these activities risked a great deal. One underground station was said to have been located at the home of Leonard Chase on Cross Street. Another station was located in the home of George McCoy, a black man, who lived on Forest Avenue.



Main building of the Normal School during the 1860's.



Elijah McCoy—1844-1929. Inventor of the McCoy lubricating cups for machinery in motion and said to be Michigan's foremost inventor. Held 54 patents and was called "The Father of Automatic Lubrication." A resident of Ypsilanti from 1870 until 1882.



First Presbyterian Church—1836.

McCoy and his wife Mildred arrived in Ypsilanti after fleeing Kentucky. They had 11 children, and their son Elijah went on to become famous as the inventor of the McCoy lubricating cups. The elder Mr. McCoy made cigars for his living. The wagon he used to transport his wares contained a false bottom. It was by this means that he was able to hide fugitive slaves and eventually lead them into safety.

One of the great disasters to hit Ypsilanti during its recorded history occurred in 1851. On March 28, a great fire destroyed 14 stores, the lumber yard of Gillman and Davis, a wagon shop, the brick store building of VanCleve and Vorheis, W.B. Hewitt's two stores on the northeast corner of Congress and Washington, the "Nunnery," and Dr. Millington's home on North Huron. Most of the buildings destroyed were built of wood. When the "Ark," a secondhand store, was threatened, citizens tied ropes around the wooden building and tried gallantly to pull it from the flames. Luckily, the building was not touched.



The Ark—built in the 1840's. This second-hand store was spared in the great fire of 1851.



St. Luke's Church—original section constructed in 1837.



Michigan Avenue (then called Congress Street) after the fire of 1851.

Elijah Grant, who had died the day before the fire, was "stretched out" in his home on the southeast corner of Congress and Washington. When the fire seemed to threaten his home, volunteers removed the coffin, marching solemnly to the Towner home on the west side of South Washington Street.

As Ypsilanti grew, two distinct districts—the "East Side" and the "West Side"—slowly emerged. Both sides boasted prosperous business centers. The East Side had the railroad station, which was never looked upon favorably by the West Side. Meanwhile, the West Side got the Post Office, which was a constant source of irritation to the East Side. Above all, there was always the fear that one side or the other would receive inadequate return for the amount of taxes it paid into the village treasury.

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Ypsilanti Cornet Band in Depot Town around 1850.

By the 1850's, jealousy became so evident that the East Side seceded from the village and established "East Ypsilanti." Residents even elected their own President and Board of Trustees. This arrangement could scarcely become permanent, and a movement from both sides was begun for obtaining a City Charter. In 1858, the two sides united and became the City of Ypsilanti. The Charter was properly revised on February 15, 1859.



Cross Street looking east toward Depot Town—about 1859.

The City's first officers were Chauncy Joslin, Mayor; John McCready, Clerk; Martello Warner, City Marshall; Charles H. Tisdale, Auditor; Thomas Ninde, Attorney; Dr. F.C. Ashley, Health Physician; Benjamin Clarke, Treasurer; and two aldermen from each of the five wards. At the first meeting, ordinances were passed relating to the prevention of animals running at large, the building of sidewalks, proper observance of the Sabbath, and the taxing of dogs. The Council also decided that all meetings would be held in public.

As the nation moved closer to civil war, Ypsilanti continued to grow. New businesses emerged during this time. Zachariah Shaw built the Ypsilanti Lime Kiln in 1862 and Jacob Grob built Ypsilanti's first brewery. The Worden Brothers established a factory which manufactured whip sockets used on carriages. A sash, door and blind factory was founded by Sweet and Henderson. A lumber business was founded by the Parsons family. In 1863, William McAndrew started his cabinet making business which eventually expanded to include wagons, carriages, sleighs and even windmills. In 1864, *The Commercial*, a hard-hitting newspaper, was born. And The First National Bank was organized with Asa Dow, Daniel L. Quirk and Cornelius Cornwell among its stockholders.

The Peninsular Paper Company was organized in 1867. In the spring of that year, the company built a mill just outside the northwestern part of the city on the south bank of the Huron River. The mill was completed in 1867 with the first paper made in 1868.

The movement which resulted in a public library for Ypsilanti was started in February, 1868, by a few women headed by Mrs. John A. Watling. A library was opened in a room in the Arcade Building on North Huron



The Old Hawkins House—about 1860. The building stood on the corner of Huron and Washington Streets.

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HYDRA-MATIC DIVISION



Peninsular Ice Company—1866. Signpost on left reads: "Fine for Driving or Racing Horses Faster than a Walk."

Street in May of that year with 175 books and \$165. Residents wishing to use the library paid a fee of \$1.00 per year. The Ladies' Library Association was incorporated in November, 1869, and efforts began to gain support for the library. By 1872, there was enough money to rent and stock larger quarters on the upper floor of the same building.

When the Civil War erupted in 1861, Ypsilanti's Light Guard was one of the first companies of the State to offer itself for Federal service. By 1862, the "Normal Company" was formed by Normal College students. It was a long, cruel war and—as the nation tried vainly to pull itself together—Ypsilanti approached the 1870's.



Looking west from the Michigan Avenue Bridge—about 1869.

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THE SECOND FIFTY YEARS 1873-1923

by Mary Wallace Baker

The years between 1873 and 1923, Ypsilanti's second 50 years, were a time of extensive industrial and physical growth for the area. Many of today's streets and blocks were platted during these years, small and large businesses prospered, and local men fought in three wars.

The Normal School continued to expand its enrollment and facilities. Detroit entered its great auto-making era around the turn of the century, an event which in later years tremendously affected the town and surrounding areas.

During the decade of the 1870's, many organizations flourished here, including groups devoted to the temperance movement, amateur musical bands, theatrical clubs, and the Ladies' Library Association. The City began to provide services for its residents.

"Cornwell, Number One" was the first organized fire department in town, about 1873, with an all-volunteer force. The engine house was located on South Huron Street near Michigan Avenue, and boasted an engine largely financed by the Cornwell Paper Mill. The first full-time paid department was initiated by the city in 1895.



Cornwell, Number One—Ypsilanti's fire department in the 1870's. Pictured with the engine were William McCullough, William Green, George L. Kishlar, William G. Shipman, F. P. Bogardus, William Robbins, Jerry Jones, Minor Downing, Cassius Holmes, William Kniseley, Lane Kniseley, Clark Cornwell, Dirk Davis and Dr. Ed Batwell.

Oddly enough, the semi-centennial celebration of the settlement of the Ypsilanti Area took place on Saturday, July 4, 1874. 1874 marked the 50th anniversary of the first July 4th celebration held in Woodruff's Grove, which took place in 1824, one year after the actual founding. It was estimated 30,000 people witnessed the gala 1874 celebration, complete with parade and fireworks. Stretched over gaily decorated Michigan Avenue was a banner, evidently invented by a town humorist, reading "Yipsylanti, Washenak; 1824-1874. Hard to Spell but Can't be Beat."

During the 1880's, as America was growing and becoming

the world's industrial leader, Ypsilanti was also expanding in all phases of business and industry. By 1887, the town of 5,000 people had 15 large manufacturing companies, employing 600 workers and paying total weekly wages of \$4,000. One of the largest businesses was the Ypsilanti Dress-Stay Manufacturing Company, where 170 girls were employed. The Ypsilanti Bustle Company, which manufactured a sliding spring bustle selling for 50 cents, was another enterprise built on the eccentricities of ladies' styles. Several industries were favorably affected by the addition of a Michigan Central Railroad spur track, which eliminated much wagon hauling, and created some excellent factory sites.



Ypsilanti Underwear Mills in the 1890's. Located on the Huron River south of Forest Street, on a site south of the present Farm Bureau.

The manufacture of threshing machines, coffee roasters, plows, baseball bats, cabinets, brick, pumps, brooms, grass seed sowers and flour and wool milling were among the important undertakings of the day. Retail interests flourished too, as businessmen joined in a spirit of cooperation rather than competition, realizing this was the key to growth.



The Mark Norris home at 213 River Street—pictured in the 1870's. The home was begun in the early 1830's, and part of the original home still stands. Norris, a prominent businessman and public office-holder, came to Ypsilanti in 1827. Lyman Decatur Norris, his son, was a lawyer in the Dred Scott case.

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Cornwell Paper Mill at the settlement of Lowell, farther up the Huron River from Ypsilanti—about 1875. The mill was destroyed by fire around the turn of the century. Detroit Edison now has a power sub-station near the site.



Michigan Central railroad engine at Ypsilanti station—late 1880's.



C. L. Yost Livery and Feed Barn at 13 North Washington Street—late 1870's. The building was the interurban station, and now houses the Food Mart, a grocery store.

The formal opening of the Ypsilanti Opera House in 1880 and the beginning of the Normal School's Conservatory of Music in 1881 were cultural highlights of the era. Exceptionally beautiful for the period, the exterior of the Opera House was done in red brick with black brick facings. A

dome topped with ornamental iron work surmounted the building. Interior ceiling decorations were medallion portraits of notable authors. Among those well-known performers who played here in Shakespearean works were Julia Marlowe and Edwin Booth, brother of John Wilkes Booth.

When the personally magnetic Frederic Pease established the Music Conservatory at the Normal in 1881, it was of benefit to the general community as well as to the School. He was responsible for adding immeasurably to the community's musical appreciation. Pease Hall, erected in 1915 on the Normal campus, was named for the professor, who died in 1909.

The discovery of mineral water here in 1882 did much to spread the name and fame of Ypsilanti across the whole country. The Ypsilanti Paper Company was the first to find the water when it drilled for pure water for its plant. At 740 feet, the water struck was believed to have great medicinal value. To capitalize on this, a large sanitarium was built on Huron near Michigan Avenue, and the water was used in the treatment of diseases. In 1884, a second well was sunk behind the sanitarium. That same year, Tubal Cain Owen sank an 800-foot deep well and found water quite



Charles King and Co. store, corner of Michigan Avenue and South Huron Street—about 1888. Left to right: John G. Lamb, Charles King, R. W. Hemphill, Jr. and Fred O. Smith.

different from the others. He also established a sanitarium and made mineral soap, distilled salts and carbonated mineral water. Products from the first well and Owen's well were shipped nationwide. The mineral water bathhouses of Ypsilanti were said to rival those of Mt. Clemens.

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T. C. Owen's "Atlantis" well—1895. Located near the site of what was later Roosevelt School on the Normal Campus.



Michigan Avenue looking east—about 1880. In the foreground are the domed Opera House, the Hawkins House and the three-storied Sanders Building, which contained seven storefronts.

The name Cleary, familiar to all area residents, made its appearance in Ypsilanti in 1883, when Patrick Roger Cleary came here and set up what was to become a business and commercial school. Cleary College was first founded, however, as a school of penmanship, in the days before the typewriter's popularity, when handwriting was considered an art. The school prospered and in 1887 work was begun on a permanent building for the school on Michigan Avenue. The structure was finished and dedicated in 1889.

Telegraphy was a popular subject taught at Cleary during this era, supplying the growing railroad industry's demand for telegraph operators. By the 1890's, the typewriter and shorthand had come into general use, and a formal secretarial course was offered at Cleary.

The 1880's and 90's saw the beginning of many municipal services, which removed Ypsilanti from the old-time village class. These services gave the town a distinct nudge toward the 20th century and a taste of the many conveniences taken for granted today.

Sixty subscribers were served by telephone when the first system was introduced in 1884, eight years after Alexander Graham Bell invented the instrument. The first office was in the Ypsilanti Paper Company.

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View of Ypsilanti from near the corner of Michigan Avenue and Prospect Street—about 1875. The intersection is the corner of Grove and Babbitt Streets. The large building in the foreground, then called the Glover Building, is now occupied by the Marsh Plating Co.

\$4,000 worth of flagstone walks, with a reputation of being the finest in any city in America, were installed in 1886. Electric lights followed in 1887. The city built a pump station, laid mains and erected a fine stand tower, now known as the Water Tower, when it began the city water system in 1889.



Ypsilanti Water Works pumping station—1900. Situated on the east side of Race Street (now Catherine Street) near Harriet Street and the Huron River.



The Water Tower—1893. Erected in 1889 and originally known as the Water Works Stand Pipe.



Central High School faculty during the 1880's. Left to right, back row: Albert J. Volland, Prof. E. M. Foote, R. W. Putnam, Supt. Front row: Prof. J. H. Shepherd, Miss Fanny Gray, Miss Ada Norton.

One year later, the Board of Water Commissioners published its first annual report, and some unexpected benefits from the town's water were included in the form of testimonials. One G. Fuller affirmed:

"I have been troubled for the last three or four years with kidney complaint, and tried almost everything I could get in the shape of medicine, but did not get any permanent relief until I commenced using the water from the Ypsilanti Water Works, and almost immediately experienced relief, and have continued to use it since . . . and can only attribute it to the water from the Ypsilanti city well."

Free mail delivery was instituted in 1888. The park system began in 1892 when a group of young women secured land for Prospect Park. Then followed Gilbert Park, Recreation Park, Waterworks Park and others. Brick street paving was begun in 1899:

During this same period the Normal was expanding, and new additions and buildings were needed to keep pace with the growth. There were several additions to the original Main Building in the 1880's. The gymnasium was built in 1894, and the Science Building in 1906. Through the generosity of Mrs. Mary Ann Starkweather, a Christian Association Building was built on the Normal campus in 1897. The lovely structure, appropriately named Starkweather Hall, still is being used as a center for campus religious affairs.

Mrs. Starkweather was known for her philanthropic endeavors, for in 1890 she had given the Starkweather home on Huron Street for the Ladies' Library. The Ladies' Library Association had vigorously continued fund-raising events since its 1868 inception, and had occupied several downtown locations before receiving the Starkweather home. 1890 was also the year the Common Council assumed the Library's operating expenses of \$250 per year, and library



Michigan State Normal School—1891.

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Workmen constructing the first mile of concrete road in the area, about two miles west of Ypsilanti—early 1900's. Mr. North Gass was the contractor. His brothers were named East, West and South.



The public drinking fountain was a gift of Mrs. Mary Ann Starkweather in 1880. It stood on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Huron Street, in front of the Ypsilanti Savings Bank. The fountain depicted Hebe, the goddess of youth and health, and cupbearer to the gods. It featured drinking places for dogs, horses and humans.

service became free to all residents. Today the old house, known as Sesquicentennial Hall, functions as headquarters for the Sesquicentennial celebration.

An offshoot of the Ladies' Library Association was the Ladies' Literary Club, organized in 1878 as a study group, with Mrs. Daniel Putnam as the first president. The Ypsilanti Study Club was formed in 1896, as an auxiliary to the Literary Club, but the connection between the two societies was dissolved in 1901.

Travel today between Ypsilanti and its neighboring city Ann Arbor is accomplished in a matter of a few minutes, and little thought is given to making even several trips back and forth a day. But in the era of horse-drawn vehicles, Ypsilantians longed for a quick, easy way to reach the county seat. The "Ypsi-Ann" street railway, a car propelled by a puffing steam engine, was set forth as the answer in 1890. So as not to frighten horses on the road, the steam engine was disguised, hopefully to resemble a woodshed on wheels. Although the train was often laid up for repairs, rarely operated on schedule and frequently ran off



Starkweather Memorial Chapel in Highland Cemetery—1893.



Central High School (Seminary) Class of 1883. Left to right, standing: Kittie Cross, Zell Baldwin, Nellie Jarvis, Joseph B. McMahon, Clara E. Lord. **Seated:** Lutie Densmore, Anna Judd, Nellie Costello, Mary E. Lord, Ella Cady.

the track, it was a delight for the nearly 600 people it carried daily.

In 1898, the "Ypsi-Ann" was electrified and joined the interurban line completed to Detroit. Connection with Saline was made in 1899, and with Jackson in 1901.

The second disaster in Ypsilanti's history occurred on April 12, 1893, when an appalling cyclone whirled down Congress Street and Michigan Avenue, leaving behind twisted houses, fallen trees, demolished buildings and a darkened city. Streets and yards were covered with blown-over trees, branches, fragments of fences and downed power lines. Walls of homes were carried away, along with household furnishings and personal belongings. Only the damaged front wall of the Opera House remained; the rest was totally demolished. A patient Chinese launderer was said to have tracked down all the blown-away shirts from his business,



The Thompson Block—1891. Northeast corner of Cross and River Streets. The building was first used as barracks for Civil War soldiers.



Michigan Avenue looking south about the turn of the century, showing the interurban line.

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SESI LINCOLN—MERCURY

YPSILANTI CYCLONE

April 12, 1893

From the Ypsilantian

SONG OF THE GREAT WIND

*Men of queenly Ypsilanti,
By the peaceful, gliding Huron,
Gladly welcomed coming night-fall,
When another day was over.
Left their homes and stores and work-shops;
Went they to the church revival,
Little knew they of the monster
Coming far off in the west-wind.
Coming with the noise of thunder,
Like a thousand locomotives,
Sparing nothing in its fury,
Came this monster of a whirl wind.*

*In a moment all was over
He had come and left his foot-prints;
Left them on the homes and work-shops;
Left them on the Business College,
Fixed the dreaded Trial Balance
For the tired worn-out student,
Down he pulled the Curtis factory;*

*Out he swept the Opera play-house;
Dined he at Hotel de Hawkins,
Did not stop to pay his board bill.
Tripped upon the sheeted tin roof,
Fell upon the Chinese wash house;
Took a bath of mineral water.
Tangled his toes in electric light wire;
Peeped he in at plate glass windows;
Tumbled over maple shade trees;
Stole a horse and crossed the Huron,
Leaving wide spread desolation.*

*Many now are poor and homeless,
Many more are sad—dishearted;
Some are happy as they ponder
On the dread "What might it have been?"
And the sons of Ypsilanti,
Once so free from fear of cyclone,
Will henceforth be filled with terror
At the sound of mighty storm wind.*

L. A. WARREN

Ypsilanti, April 13, 1893

some being found as far away as Canton Township.

Cleary College was hard hit—the back portion fell in, the tower overturned and the east wall blew out. A few rooms were discovered usable and Professor Cleary, with great courage, at once began to secure workmen and materials to rebuild. He reopened his school four days later.

The 19th century was ushered out with a great change in the appearance of downtown Ypsilanti. For many years, great wooden awnings or "sheds" projected over the sidewalks from Michigan Avenue stores, which were appreciated by some for their shade and protection from the weather. But some thought them old fashioned and an eyesore. The



The Opera House in ruins after the cyclone.



6 a.m., April 13, 1893. The day after the cyclone hit Ypsilanti. This scene of destruction was taken on Huron Street looking south from the corner of Pearl Street.



Cleary College after the cyclone.

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Mayor decided they should be removed, after repeated tauntings from the Ann Arbor newspaper editor and various Ypsilanti residents. However, storekeepers declined to follow Council's order, and at midnight November 3, 1899, a City-

employed force demolished the ancient structures. The next morning, Michigan Avenue looked as if another cyclone had struck. Soon after, the debris was cleared and merchants installed canvas awnings.



Michigan Avenue near Washington Street—1893. Wooden sheds protected shoppers.



Huron Street looking north from Michigan Avenue—1893.



Ypsilanti High School baseball team—1895.



A July 4th float—about 1892. Corner of Cross and River Streets, showing the railroad gate house.



Scene from Ypsilanti High School production of "The Sorcerer"—1893. Taking part in the peasant's dance were, left to right: Nan Babbitt, Will Stowe, Lynn Deubel, Ford George, Bess Neate and Dan L. Quirk, Jr.



Fourth Ward School—first grade class of 1892. The school was located at the corner of Prospect Street and Michigan Avenue. Left to right, front row: Helen Cornwell, Maude Davis, Edward George (guest), Sarah Coates; second row: unknown, Maude Durand, Miss Steffy (teacher), Harry Bueland, Marian George; third row: Charles Guerin, Bert Stockdale, Leon Tenny, Bert Thayer, Coleman, Don Ryan.

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Forest Avenue at Hamilton Street—1893. In the foreground is the home of John Jenness, an insurance and investment broker, who built the home.



View north from the Cross Street bridge showing the Ypsilanti Underwear Mills and its dam—1893.

Although Ypsilanti's men did not attain the spotlight as the "Rough Riders" did in the Spanish-American War, the local National Guard Company "G" did see service in Cuba. When President McKinley called for 125,000 volunteers in 1898 to help free Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippine Islands from the Spanish, the local young men responded quickly and enthusiastically. Michigan's National Guard troops were ordered to the Island Lake camp, and the town took a holiday to see them off at the interurban station. Patriotic speeches were made, factory whistles were blown, and a small cannon was fired by the Normal students.

Company "G," later known as the 31st Regiment, was mustered into United States service on May 9, and moved shortly thereafter to Camp Thomas at Chickamauga Park, Georgia. In September it travelled to Knoxville, Tennessee, and then to Savannah, Georgia, in January of 1899. In the meantime, events had transpired which resulted in the final surrender of the Spanish forces. The 31st finally left the States and arrived in Cuba about February 1, where the men did police and guard duty. The regiment returned home, received royal honors, and was mustered out of service on May 17, 1899. Only one death was recorded, from disease at Chickamauga.



Troops leaving for Spanish-American War—April 26, 1898. Scene on Washington Street at Michigan Avenue, looking north. The men left on the inter-urban line.



Company G, 31st Michigan Volunteer Infantry, Spanish-American War—1899. At Island Lake Camp on New Year's Day.



Fourth of July—1899. Float heading south on Huron Street near corner of Michigan Avenue. Barbera Disbrow is riding on the Macca-bee float.

After a small population loss in the early 1900's, business expanded and the town prospered in the century's second decade. Many workers in the industrial plants on the River Rouge commuted by interurban or bus from Ypsilanti, finding it a place for healthy living and for rearing children. Among some of the local industries operating during this period were a fender company, a coaster wagon manufactory, steel stamping factories, laundry and garment making companies and the Peninsular Paper Company.



Peninsular Paper Company—1916.



The 1901-02 Ypsilanti Whist Club pictured in a buggy owned by the Palace Livery, Ann Arbor. Some members of the club were Mrs. E. D. Mathews, Mrs. J. H. Tepper, Mrs. L. M. James, Miss Hattie Bonsteel, Mrs. Carlos Childs, Mrs. H. R. Scovill and Mrs. Henry Platt.



Michigan Central Gardens north of the railroad station—about 1900. Established and maintained by Station Agent Damon and landscape gardener John Laidlaw.



Ypsilanti Central High School—Class of 1900.



Ypsilanti High School football team—1906. Left to right, back row: John Bishop, coach; Glen Grant, Allen Sherzer, Harry Baker, Lawrence James, Glen Colby, F. U. Quillen, principal. Second row: Arthur Lathers, Gordon Osborne, George McKay, Harold Harvey, Ernest Rogers, Truman Dean. Front row: Edward S. George, John Brooks, Mac Morison, Harold Killian.

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Ypsilanti Fire Station—1909.



Ypsilanti Police Department—1905. Left to right: Tom Ryan, Milo Gage and Walter Pierce.

Because of the rapid expansion of the auto industry, Michigan's wealth grew. The Normal School was the direct recipient of some benefits of the prosperous local and state economy. Attendance increased from 1,580 in 1912 to 2,294 in 1922. Sixty-five acres were added to the campus; in 1913, a new building program was initiated. The Men's Gymnasium in 1913, Pease Auditorium in 1915 and the Administration Building in 1918 were the new additions. Work on the Normal High School began in 1923, and was officially named Theodore Roosevelt High School the following year. Roosevelt graduated many classes until its closing on June 30, 1969. The building is presently being renovated and will house home economics and military science classes.

New departments were added, and in 1915 the Normal and Cleary College affiliated. Commercial students at the Normal received bookkeeping, stenography, typewriting and business administration courses at Cleary, and the usual academic studies and teaching methods at the Normal.

In 1914, the city acquired a property which would later become a valuable historic landmark of the area. This was the Daniel L. Quirk, Sr., home, now the Ypsilanti City Hall, which was a memorial gift to the town from the Quirk children.

The development of Ypsilanti's public school system was given a boost in 1915 when the High School Building on West Cross Street was begun. Construction cost was put at \$122,000.



Ypsilanti High School—1916.



Michigan Ladder Company on East Forest Avenue—1916.

Men's and women's organizations and churches thrived during the 15-year period before World War 1. Not to be left out were the community's young men, and the Boy Scouts were formed here in 1910. The following year the troops marched in Detroit as an honor guard for President William H. Taft. In 1911 the Scouts assisted at the State Encampment of Civil War veterans, the 50th anniversary of the great conflict.

The first Beyer Hospital was dedicated in 1918, having been made possible by the sum of \$50,000 left in the will of Augustus Beyer. The Hospital was owned and operated by the City, and was funded by residents' tax dollars. Rooms in the hospital were furnished by families and organizations, and city doctors provided the operating room equipment.

One of the first and finest "little theatres" in the country flourished in Ypsilanti under the direction of Daniel L. Quirk, Jr. It grew from a group of play-reading townspeople who wished to portray lines dramatically before an audience. An old barn behind the Ladies' Library was purchased, painted and made ready for an audience of 50. With the exception of a few years, plays were produced regularly, and they were considered a successful adjunct of the city's social and intellectual life.

Ypsilanti's National Guard contingent did not see fighting action in the 1916 conflict with Mexico, although the men of Company A of the Signal Corps were activated and ordered to Camp Grayling, Michigan, and from there to

El Paso, Texas. Their duties were routine and included work in telegraphy and drill. They returned home in March, 1917, and had scarcely settled back into civilian life when America entered World War 1.

The contingent was expanded into two companies, radio and wire, and enlistment began for the enlarged battalion. In August, 1917, the Corps again left for Camp Grayling. It was transferred to Waco, Texas, in September and began intensive training for war service. Overseas orders were received and, on January 23, 1918, the men sailed for England and hence to France. There the Corps proceeded to the training area of the 32nd Division, 200 miles southeast of Paris.

The Division was ordered to the front on May 29, and saw action at Chateau-Thierry and the Battle of the Argonne. Ten Ypsilantians perished in the conflict, either in camp, in the hospital or on the field, before the Signal Corps embarked for home on the Battleship Rhode Island. They reached Boston on May 19, 1919, and entrained for Camp Custer, where they were mustered out on May 25.

At home, the people responded enthusiastically in supporting the war effort, loyally backing conservation campaigns, meatless days and gasolineless Sundays. The Ypsilanti Patriotic Service League was the coordinator of fund raising for war charities. Early in 1917, the town's chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution organized the local branch of the Red Cross, where clothing for refugees was collected and packets for soldiers assembled.



Alley Fiesta Circus—1918. Held for the benefit of the Red Cross.

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Stores, factories and schools were closed Monday, November 11, for celebration of the Armistice. A large parade was held and the Kaiser, in effigy, was dragged through the confetti-strewn streets and thoroughly hanged.

Two tablets honoring Ypsilanti soldiers of World War 1 were placed at the west end of the Cross Street bridge. The American Legion Post here was formed in 1920, and

construction was begun on the Armory in 1923.

In 1920, shortly after the war, the Ypsilanti Board of Commerce was organized. Its activities and achievements were many, among the most noteworthy being the building of the Huron Hotel. Capital was raised by selling shares to townspeople, and the Hotel's grand opening was celebrated on New Year's Day, 1923.



Huron Street looking south from near the corner of Pearl Street—1929.



Michigan Central passenger and freight depots on East Cross Street, with the gate house at the right—1929.



Ypsilanti Centennial Pageant—1923.

1923—a great year in Ypsilanti's history. For this was the town's 100th year, and her residents determined that the celebration of that birthday should long be remembered. No effort was spared in making the event worth "coming home" for. A pageant, directed by D.L. Quirk, Jr., was seen by an estimated 25,000 persons. Churches sponsored special programs and dedications. An old-time postal-service stage-coach made the trip from Detroit to Ypsilanti, and was "held up" several times along the way by Kiwanians and Rotarians. A centennial ball, featuring 1880's costumes, was held. Businesses featured window displays, and barbecues

and ball games were held. The centennial celebration truly did honor to the founding fathers.



Log cabin moved from Willis and reconstructed here for the Centennial celebration—1923. Located on the south side of East Michigan Avenue at Lincoln Street. The man with the beard is 100-year-old Seth Reed.



Harvey C. Colburn—1875-1958. Minister of Ypsilanti's First Congregational Church from 1918 until retirement in 1938, becoming minister emeritus in 1948. Dr. Colburn, very active in community and civic affairs, wrote "The Story of Ypsilanti" for the 1923 centennial celebration.

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Michigan Avenue looking east from Adams Street—1929.



North Huron Street looking north from Washtenaw—1929. The D. L. Quirk, Jr. home, seen on the right, is now the District Court.

THE LAST FIFTY YEARS 1923-1973

by Barbara A. Fairfield

As life in America was being transformed by "horseless carriages," production of these cars affected the industry and growth of Ypsilanti. Detroit had become the center of American automobile manufacturing because Michigan had a good supply of hardwood, used in the early models, and the Great Lakes provided economical shipping for coal, iron, ore and steel. To reduce shipping costs, manufacturers began to set up parts and assembly plants in various sections of the country.

In 1931, the Ford Motor Company purchased property in Ypsilanti on Factory Street. This is where the Cornwell Paper Mill was located in 1867 and where Mr. Winaldo Wigle of Canada established the United States Whiffletree Company in 1900. When Mr. Wigle returned to Canada, he sold his company to the United States Pressed Steel Company, which was financed by new capital provided by the city of Ypsilanti.



U.S. Pressed Steel Company—about 1929. Future site of Ford Motor Company.



Ypsilanti Police Department—1931. Seated, left to right: Joseph Sackman, Ernest Klavitter, Ralph Southard, William Morey. Standing, from left: Maurice Miller, William Franklin, Cyril Ray, Herman Oltersdorf, Emil Susterka, Walter Laidlaw, Adolph Bergor, Arthur Kramer, Ernest Rowe, Cay Rankin.

When Ford bought this property for a parts plant, the company also purchased Ypsilanti's powerhouse on adjoining land. The powerhouse was converted to supply electricity for manufacturing operations. The original power for the plant was generated at the Ford Rawsonville Dam, four miles down river from the powerhouse.

Henry Ford personally purchased and rebuilt the city's water pumps, which pumped the last water for Ypsilanti on October 31, 1931. He held these pumps in readiness for any emergency that might occur in the community. The pumps were removed in 1946 when part of the powerhouse was converted to administrative offices.

Ford's Ypsilanti Plant began making automotive parts in 1932. That year, several hundred employees built starters and generators in a factory that contained 63,000 square feet.

During World War II, automobile production was suspended. The plant built starters and generators for airplanes, armored cars, tanks and other military equipment. A special department was established to manufacture precision parts for the Pratt-Whitney aircraft engine.

After the war, production of automobile starters and generators resumed. Five major building additions have brought the plant to its present size of 976,600 square feet.

The General Parts Division Headquarters and the Rawsonville Plant were built in 1956 on a township site a few miles south of Ypsilanti. The Rawsonville Plant manufactures numerous products, including carburetors and master-brake cylinders. Over 5,000 are now employed at both the Plant and Division Headquarters.

Today, the Ypsilanti Plant employs 3,600 people and still makes starters and generators, as well as distributors, shock absorbers and many other parts. The Ypsilanti and Rawsonville Plants are two of the largest in the General Parts Division of the Ford Motor Company.

In addition to his skill and knowledge in the automotive field, Henry Ford had a strong feeling for the land and purchased several hundred acres on the banks of a stream called Willow Run. Ford felt that boys would become better men and better citizens if they learned the use of land and the things it could do. Because of these beliefs, he sponsored a camp near Dearborn where boys lived in army tents and raised crops.

In 1939, after the Dearborn camp was successful, Ford opened "Camp Willow Run" for sons of veterans of World War I. Sixty-five boys came to the camp that April and lived there until November. They farmed 320 acres, working eight hours a day for 25 cents an hour. The boys raised vegetables and sold them at a stand on Ecorse Road. These crops were planted and harvested for the last time in 1941.

With the United States involved in World War II, Henry Ford and the Ford Motor Company had been chosen by the Federal government to build the largest bomber plant in the



Michigan Avenue looking west—1941.

world. Because Ford and his company had the most experience in large industrial development and in mass production methods, they were needed to produce the B-24 bomber which became known around the world as the famous "Liberator."

Ground at Camp Willow Run was broken for the Bomber Plant in April of 1941, and enough of the building was completed by fall to begin the manufacture of parts for the airplanes. The government purchased additional land adjoining Ford's acreage in order to have room for an airport next to the plant. Bulldozers began to level the earth in July, 1941, and paving of the airfield runways was finished the following December.

The first workers at the Bomber Plant were Ford employees who were transferred from other Ford factories. But this plant was designed to employ from 50,000 to 100,000 workers—five to ten times the number of people then living in Ypsilanti. And Ypsilanti was the city nearest to the plant, only three and one-half miles west of it.

By December 1, 1941, just seven days before Pearl Harbor, the new Bomber Plant had begun to hire outside workers. People came to Willow Run from all of the states in the Union and even from Puerto Rico. Many came from farms and from little towns and crossroads. Although some people came to get jobs and make money, others came because they wanted to contribute their efforts to help win the war.

When these people reached Willow Run, there was a crying need for shelter. Some of the new workers slept in their cars, some bought trailers and some pitched tents. There was such a demand for housing that some Ypsilanti landlords rented the same room to two different people: one tenant slept in the daytime and worked on the night

shift, while the other slept at night and worked on the day shift.

The Federal Public Housing Administration began to develop plans for a town near the Bomber Plant. Local citizen groups protested and argued over these plans for several months, but finally it was agreed that the Administration would build temporary housing—dormitories for single people and dwellings for family groups—on a site of 2,641 acres between Michigan Avenue and Geddes Road.

The first dormitory opened in February, 1943, with a capacity for 3,000 people. The fastest way to get shelter for couples was to bring in trailers. Within a few months, there were 960 of these trailers parked at the Willow Court Trailer Project between Holmes Road and Clark Road.

As soon as a street was laid, trucks rolled in carrying prefab houses in sections. Some of these "flat-tops" were ready for tenants in June, 1943, and there were enough temporary buildings to provide homes for 2,500 families later that year. Each section contained four, six or eight apartments with one, two or three bedrooms. This "flat-top" part of Willow Run was always called "the Village."

Buildings with peaked roof tops were built for couples or for three adults in a section known as West Court. The first of these apartments was ready for occupancy in August, 1943, along with another dormitory project.

By the end of 1943, there were six different temporary projects in Willow Run: two dormitories, the Willow Court Trailer Project, a site for privately-owned trailers, and the two apartment projects for couples or families. There was shelter for more than 15,000 people, which was more than the population of Ypsilanti.

Two commercial areas were built for shopping and services, along with community buildings, churches and an infirmary. The government planned and constructed a building for the Washtenaw County Sheriff's branch office and the Willow Run Fire Department. The Federal Works Agency built schools with funds approved for new schools in communities where there were war plants. To encourage workers to come from Detroit and surrounding areas to the Bomber Plant, the first double super-highway—the Expressway—was built.

In June, 1943, the Bomber Plant reached its peak of employment with more than 42,000 workers. By January, 1944, when nearly 14,000 people lived in the temporary houses, there were 35,644 workers at the plant. Many lived in Detroit, Wayne and other nearby towns; they were driving to work on the new Expressway.

The Bomber Plant was national news. People came from all parts of the United States, Canada and South America to see the war housing community. But the Willow

Run pioneers had their problems and hardships. The stoves smoked, the iceboxes dripped, and everything was in short supply and rationed. Since all the trailers and dwellings looked alike, many sheepish faces appeared at the office to inquire where they lived!

Months before "Victory in Europe Day," workers at the Bomber Plant had achieved a great production record by completing a B-24 every hour of every day. By the end of the war, a total of 8,685 B-24 Liberators had rolled from assembly lines that were three-quarters of a mile long.

As the efficiency of the plant increased, fewer workers were needed. By spring of 1945, the total labor force was down to 16,000 workers. After V-E Day, production was stopped and only planes under construction were finished. People began to leave Willow Run. In June, 1945, more than 1,000 families returned to their home communities. By December, fewer than 600 families remained in the "ghost town."



"Flat-tops" at Willow Village—1948.

John F. Barnhill—1876-1941. Mathematics professor at the Normal College. When he came to Ypsilanti in 1922 and discovered the city had no band, he organized a 50-piece band at the Normal in 1923 and formed the Ypsilanti High School Band in 1924. His Girls' Drum and Bugle Corps, organized in 1937, became famous throughout the state. He also directed a Community Band and began summer concerts in Prospect Park.



The John F. Barnhill Memorial Band—1948. A Memorial Band, formed after Prof. Barnhill's death in 1941, continued his tradition of community service by marching in parades and giving concerts. This picture was taken at Recreation Park when the band performed during opening ceremonies for the city's baseball season. Back row, left to right: Larry Oltersdorf, Edmund Terrall, Donald Stadler, LaVerne Howard, Robert Norton, Unknown, George Moorman, Robert Hickman. Second row: Clare Saltz, Howard Seitz, Unknown, Thomas Herman, Unknown, Thomas Harvey, Harry Gillette, Harold Ford, Melvin Giles. Front row: Unknown, Lorne Kennedy, Unknown, George Hayes, George Lamkin, Dan Hickman, Ralph Stitt, and director George Cavender. First director was Harold Goodman, and former directors were B. Allen Townsend and Lynn Cooper.

The war in the Pacific ended on August 14, 1945. Our men in service were scattered all over the world and counting the days until they could go home.

But all available labor and materials had been used for the war effort; nothing had been done to build homes for the returning soldiers and their families. To solve the immediate housing shortage, the United States Congress passed legislation which changed "Temporary War Housing" into "Temporary Veterans Housing." So the buildings at Willow Run Village, which were constructed with a minimum of materials and expected to last no longer than five years, became "home" to returning soldiers.

Many men and women planned to use the "GI Bill" to attend school at the University of Michigan or at Michigan State Normal College, but housing in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti was inadequate. The University of Michigan and the Public Housing Administration reached an agreement which enabled young families and single students to live in the apartments and dormitories at Willow Run. Several surplus government buses were turned over to the University to provide transportation.

Early in 1946, the Kaiser-Frazer Corporation obtained the Bomber Plant from the Federal Government and converted it for the manufacture of automobiles. Many of the

workers hired by Kaiser-Frazer were veterans who came to Willow Run to rent an apartment.



Gaudy's Chocolate Shop—1946. Popular spot on N. Washington Street, now occupied by Marsh's. Famous for their own chocolate syrup and chocolate candies mailed nationwide.



A Centennial Parade in Depot Town for Michigan State Normal—May, 1949.

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But the famous Bomber Plant was not to be forgotten in these postwar days. A member of the Edsel Ford Post of the American Legion suggested to fellow members that a suitable memorial should be erected nearby to commemorate the B-24 Liberator.

In a letter sent to Washington, Legionnaires requested a dummy bomb as a reminder of the planes that dropped bombs. A polite reply advised that no dummy bomb was available. Then the Legionnaires decided to send another letter, this time requesting a bomber. To their amazement, the War Department agreed!

On February 26, 1946, a battle-wise B-24 made her last landing at Willow Run Airport. The plane and her crew were given a proper reception, and the Legion members accepted full custodial responsibility.

A special committee was in charge of transporting old Number 139 from the airport to a spot near the post headquarters on Michigan Avenue, where dedication ceremonies were to take place on May 26, 1946. As the plane

was moved slowly along its route, a ramp was constructed over a railroad spur, part of a main gate was taken down, a tree was dug out, highway signs were dismantled and a utility pole was removed. At last, she was parked under an apple tree on Michigan Avenue near Spencer Street. The apple orchard was government property and situated just across the street from post headquarters.

The dedication ceremonies were held as scheduled, with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford as the guests of honor. People were proud that old 139 had come home to Willow Run, where she had made her maiden flight. She symbolized the work of the people who built her and the courage of the men who had flown her.

She settled down under the apple tree and became something of a landmark for Ypsilanti residents. Her unmistakable presence was especially useful in directing people to Willow Run Village.

But the months wore into years; the famous bomber became a victim of the elements. Finally, in 1950, workers for a scrap metal company carefully removed the pieces.



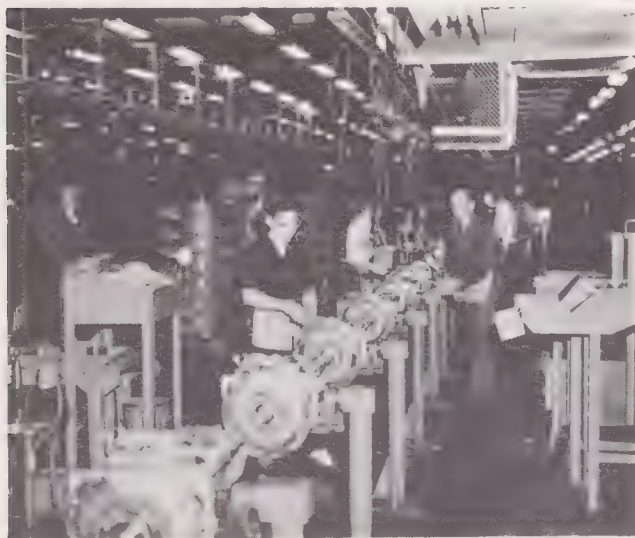
The day the B-24 came home to Willow Run Airport—February, 1946. Members of Edsel Ford Post of the American Legion welcome the crew of old Number 139.

Float winners in the 4th of July Children's Parade—1949. Lee Wynn, first prize; Don Harvey, second prize; Dick Warner, Bob Bruce and Chuck Warner, third prize; David Joslyn, fourth prize; Larry Deck and his assistants, fifth prize.



July 4th Parade—1949. This covered wagon reenacted the city's first July 4th celebration 125 years ago by making the overland trip from Detroit to Ypsilanti with supplies. A sign on the wagon says: "1824—125 Years Ago Ypsilanti Celebrated her First 4th. Food and Drinks were transported from Detroit, the frontier outpost . . ." Rep. Joseph Warner and former Postmaster Matt Max ride the wagon while American Legionnaire Robert Boomer in a high hat walks beside the rig.

The Kaiser-Frazer Corporation stopped manufacturing automobiles at Willow Run in 1953. General Motors purchased the factory for its Hydra-Matic Division. In 1959, when GM moved its Chevrolet and Fisher Body Divisions into connecting buildings at Willow Run, the old Bomber Plant became the scene of a growing production complex.



A General Motors assembly line at Willow Run—1959.

The Chevrolet and Fisher Body Divisions were reorganized under a single management group in 1971 and were named the General Motors Assembly Division. Today, this Assembly Division employs 5,600 people and Hydra-Matic employs 6,800.

Unlike the usual town or village, Willow Run Village had no local government. It was a government-owned housing project; all residents paid rent to the Treasurer of the United States.

The Willow Run Village Resident Council was formed early in 1947 *"to act for the residents in making this community a better place in which to live."* Meanwhile, Congress began to draft firm deadlines for the disposition of temporary housing projects throughout the United States. With the start of the Korean Conflict in 1950, the deadlines were suspended.

Because the future of their homes was at stake, another group of residents organized the Willow Run Redevelopment Committee later that year. Redevelopment possibilities were complicated by the fact that the northern half of Willow Run was in Superior Township and the southern half in Ypsilanti Township. Yet the village population exceeded by far the population of the two townships.



Fire at City Hall—August 1, 1951.

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GEER FUNERAL HOME
HAAB'S RESTAURANT

After an agreement was reached between the two townships, Ypsilanti Township signed papers on October 29, 1954, to buy Willow Village from the Federal Government. By taking over the dwelling areas, the township saved nearly 2,500 families from eviction by the Public Housing Administration. Township officials agreed to maintain the housing units while building new homes as fast as possible. This historic transfer finally made Willow Run a permanent community.



Ypsilanti Township buys Willow Village—October, 1954. Signing the official papers are, left to right: Henry Hicks, Donald Ehle and Hugo Schwartz. Witnessing the signatures are, from left: Harold Tepper, Emary Mulholland, Emil Ludke, Miss Marion Wilson, Robert Norris, James Sanderson, Paul Moore, William Gallaher and Eugene Calder.

A gavel made of pine from the White House is presented to Mayor Carl Scheffler by U.S. Representative George Meader—October, 1952. According to the plaque, the pine dates from December, 1817, when the White House was rebuilt for President Monroe after British troops destroyed the original building. This piece of wood was removed in 1950 during a renovation.





Ypsilanti High School Football Champions—October, 1949. Winners of the 6B Championship, their fourth successive title.



Drum and Bugle Corps marching east on Michigan Avenue in the July 4th Parade—1951.

For nearly 20 years, from 1947 to 1966, Willow Run Airport was the key commercial and passenger terminal for southeastern Michigan. Having been built to launch bombers, its 10 runways were the only ones in the area large enough to handle the bigger planes.

When the University of Michigan purchased Willow Run Airport for \$1.00 from the Federal Government in 1946, the special agreement stipulated that the University must operate it for the public. In 1957, at a cost of \$1.5 million, the former B-24 hangar was converted and remodeled into a luxurious passenger terminal with a futuristic ceiling and indirect lighting.



Willow Run Air Terminal after remodeling in 1957.

But airplanes of the Jet-Age required even larger facilities. After completion of Detroit Metropolitan Airport in 1964, the last passenger airline moved out of Willow Run in 1966.

The facility stood unused for a while until freight lines began shipping cargo out of the airport. Now private pilots keep their planes there, and so do commercial flight training and rental firms.

Increasing demands for space have initiated plans to restore the passenger terminal to its original function as an airplane hangar. Within a few months, the terminal will be stripped of its passenger service trappings to make room for small corporation jets and private single-engine pleasure craft.

All the "flat-tops" and other temporary housing units at Willow Village are now gone, replaced by sprawling suburbs with modern homes and tree-lined streets. During the postwar years, school leaders planned to meet the increasing needs of their community. In the fall of 1952, Edmonson School was opened to provide a junior high school for the entire district as well as a wing for the elementary children in the immediate area. Willow Run High School on Spencer Road was opened in the fall of 1955.



Dedication of Edmonson School—April, 1953.

During the war years of 1943-44, 2,195 pupils attended schools in Willow Run. After a decrease during the "ghost town" years, enrollment gradually increased. In February, 1973, there were 3,941 pupils attending the six elementary schools and the junior and senior high schools.

The first schools had been built with Federal Funds approved for communities where there were war plants. Now the residents of Willow Run support an entire school district of their own.



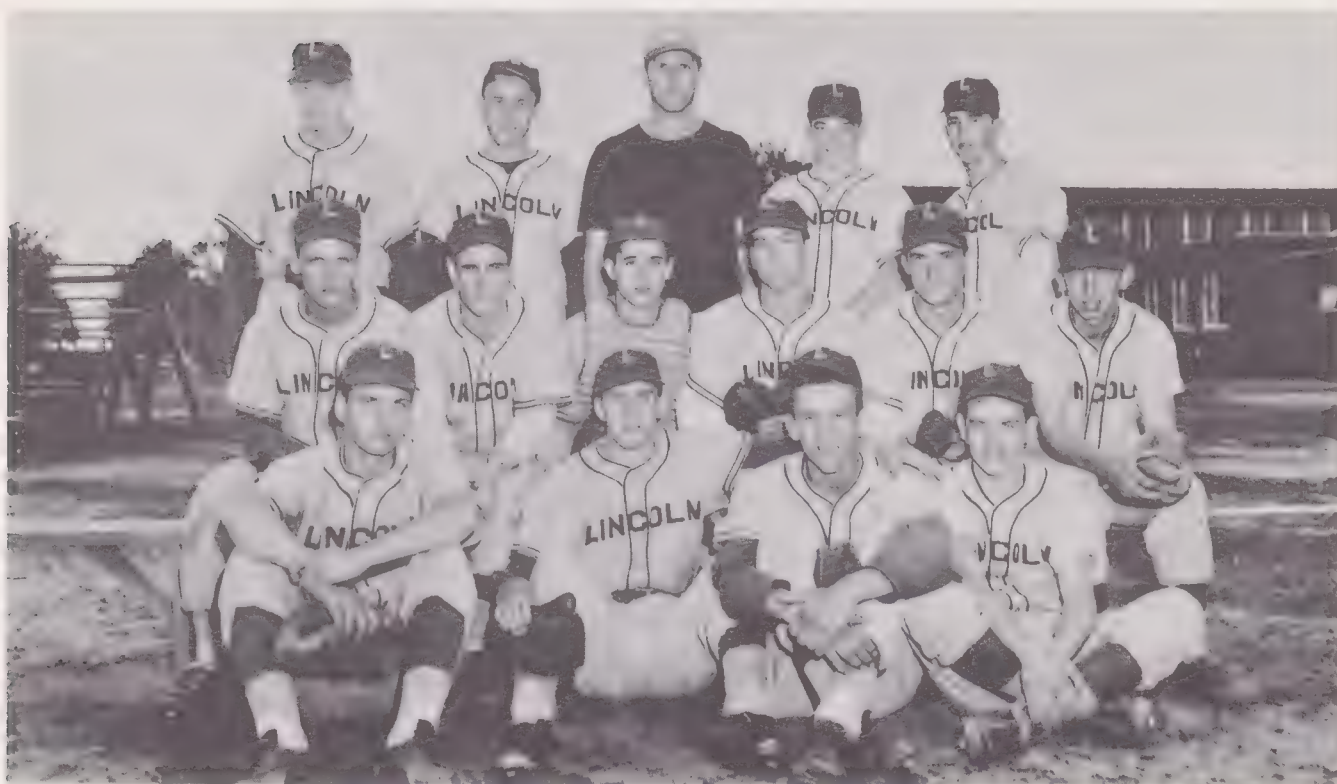
A reception to honor the new school superintendent and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Evert Ardis—October, 1953. Standing in the receiving line, left to right, are: Alexander Canja, Mrs. Myrne Howe, Mr. Ardis, Mrs. Ardis, Mrs. A. Dorothy Barnes and Donald Racine.



Dedication ceremony for Ernest Chapelle portrait in the Chapelle School lobby—May, 1954. Left to right: Mrs. Ruth Miller, principal; Ben H. VandenBelt, Lincoln superintendent, who spoke in tribute; R. S. Gerganoff, architect, who donated the portrait; Mrs. Ernest Chapelle; Carl Johnson, president of the school board; Evert Ardis, superintendent of Ypsilanti schools; Robert Kuras, student council president; Mary Smith, who gave the invocation. In front: Dan Matevia, program chairman; and Nancy Morris, student council secretary who gave the benediction.



Brotherhood Week Banquet at the A.M.E. Church—February, 1953. Among the 220 guests were, left to right: Rev. Garther Roberson, Second Methodist Church; E. H. Chapelle, Superintendent of Schools; host Rev. Thomas H. Smith, Brown Chapel, A.M.E. Church; William G. Weber, St. John's Catholic Church; guest speaker Rev. J. L. Roberts, Bethel Church, Detroit; and Benjamin A. Rossin, B'nai B'rith, Ann Arbor.



Lincoln School Baseball Team: Huron League Champs—1954.

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In 1933, Cleary College was officially incorporated as a private, non-profit, specialized institution governed by a Board of Trustees. Patrick R. Cleary, the school's founder and first President, remained active in the affairs of the College until 1940. He then turned the presidency over to his son Owen, who had been a practicing attorney in Detroit.

Owen J. Cleary assumed the duties of president until he was called into service during World War II. Patrick Cleary came out of retirement to take over as President and Chairman of the Board until his death in 1948. Then the younger Cleary resumed his role as President.

Owen Cleary asked Dr. Walter Greig to act as a temporary adviser in 1949. Dr. Greig, a practicing attorney from Texas, had been stationed in Detroit with Army Intelligence during the postwar years. His job was to have lasted about a year; but Dr. Greig has been at Cleary for 24 years and has helped it become a highly respected business college.

Immediately following World War II, Cleary had an enrollment of 152 students. By 1950, that number had risen to 279. Dr. Greig and Donald M. Silkworth, a Cleary Trustee for many years, decided that the college would have to move from Ypsilanti's downtown area in order to expand.

The two men chose the present location on Washtenaw Avenue and Hewitt Road. Cleary purchased a 3-block area at the new site and later bought an additional 12 acres. Today, the campus encompasses 25 acres.

A successful fund drive enabled Cleary College to erect its first building on this site. The cornerstone ceremony for the three-storied, 24-room structure was held in June, 1960. Mr. Silkworth became President that year after the death of Owen Cleary.

The school's enrollment continued to increase during the 60's. A new auditorium and gymnasium were completed in May of 1970, and the addition was named in honor of Donald M. Silkworth. Mr. Silkworth retired as President in 1970 and became Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The Board elected Dr. Greig as the new President.

Cleary's faculty and curricula emphasize the mastery of useful skills in the shortest possible time and teach an appreciation of the free enterprise system. Complete secretarial, managerial and accounting programs are offered in day and evening classes. Enrollment has increased 20 percent since last year and now totals 615 students. Today, Cleary College is accredited as a "Senior College of Business" by the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools. It is considered one of the leading schools of secretarial science and accounting in the country.



Cleary College with 1970 addition.



Flag-raising ceremonies at the West Side Fire Station—July, 1960. Raising the flag are E. Edwin Ensign, President, Kiwanis Club of Greater Ypsilanti; Roy Smith, Township Supervisor; and Edward Wagner, Chief of the Township Fire Department. On the left are firemen Cecil Kennard, Arthur Richardson, Eldred Lillie and Carl Roe. On the right are Harold Yates, Township Trustee and Thomas R. East, Kiwanis Club Secretary.

When the population of Willow Run, Ypsilanti and surrounding areas continued to grow, Beyer Hospital needed to expand its facilities. A new hospital, city-owned and tax-supported, was built next to the original building on Prospect Street in the early 1940's.

The high cost of providing all the necessary medical services in each community prompted the Michigan Legislature to pass the Hospital Authority Act of 1945. The Act allowed community hospitals to join with others, and then this Hospital Authority could levy a joint assessment on area property and could construct facilities where they were most needed.

When the Peoples Community Hospital Authority (PCHA) held its first meeting in October, 1945, Ypsilanti was one of the nine community members. In 1947, just three years after the new building was completed, Ypsilanti sold its Beyer Hospital to the PCHA. The Authority then built hospitals in Lincoln Park and Wayne, both of which opened late in 1957. A fourth facility in Trenton opened in 1961.

The Peoples Community Hospital Authority is one of the largest hospital systems in Michigan, now serving 23 communities in western Wayne County and eastern Washtenaw County. When Beyer became obsolete, the PCHA began construction of a new facility across the street. This modern, 174-bed Beyer Hospital was completed in 1970.



Modern Beyer Hospital.

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Through the years, the library on North Huron Street was supported by an increasing amount of city tax dollars. Members of the Ladies' Library Association began to think that the library should belong to the city of Ypsilanti.

In the fall of 1948, the old "Ladies' Library" sign was changed to "Public Library." In March, 1949, *"the building, the grounds in which it stands and the entire contents"* were accepted by the city as a gift from the Association. The library became a regular city department with the librarian directly responsible to the City Manager.

When the Post Office moved to its new quarters on South Adams Street in the fall of 1962, Ypsilanti took advantage of a government policy which allows Federal buildings to be turned over to municipalities for educational and/or cultural purposes. The city purchased the old Post Office building on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Adams Street for \$1.00, and it became our present library. The Ypsilanti Historical Museum was housed in the library basement until it was moved to the Barnes-Ross Home at 220 North Huron Street in the spring of 1970.

Since July, 1969, a library bookmobile has traveled the service area of 36 square miles. A children's section opened recently in the library basement; a large collection of new disc recordings now includes all types of phonograph albums, from Shakespearean readings and foreign music to children's stories and folk songs. In the future, library personnel hope to add an audio-visual department to their expanding services.



Ypsilanti Historical Museum—known as the Barnes-Ross Home, built by Asa Dow in 1860.



Ypsilanti Public Library. Constructed in 1915 by the Federal Government, this building was our Post Office for 47 years.



Dawson, Wesley—Postmaster of Ypsilanti, 1949-1964.

Although teacher preparation was the primary purpose of Michigan State Normal School, this purpose was always broadly interpreted to include instruction in liberal arts, science and other areas. The faculty began developing academic courses far more advanced than those offered in other schools.

As one of the first education colleges in the nation, the Ypsilanti institution had a primary role in defining America's educational philosophy. When the Normal School insisted that a liberal arts education was essential in the development of a professional teacher, this concept became an important legacy to the teaching profession.

With the opening of other State normal colleges, the State Legislature recognized the need to change the name of this school to one more descriptive of its location. In 1956, Michigan State Normal College became Eastern Michigan College.

The educational aims and objectives of the College were gradually undergoing modification and expansion, too. The State Legislature also recognized this fact by granting the school University status on June 1, 1959.

In its role as a multi-purpose state university, Eastern Michigan University has expanded to include increased

emphasis in all areas of liberal arts in graduate study, in science and in business. An increasing number of students are coming from outside the southeastern section of Michigan; many come from other states and from abroad. Approximately 42 percent of them are in non-teaching curriculums.

From its creation in 1849 until January 1, 1964, EMU was governed by the State Board of Education. Since the new State Constitution was adopted, the school has been governed by an eight-member Board of Regents.

Although Eastern is 124 years old, its most rapid growth has been recent. Over \$50,000,000 in major construction has been completed since 1960. In 1955, there were 3,400 students enrolled. Enrollment climbed to 5,900 in 1962; then it jumped to 10,200 in 1965. In the fall of 1972, enrollment of undergraduates, graduates and special students totaled 19,107.

Under the leadership of Dr. Harold E. Sponberg, President since July, 1965, Eastern Michigan University has moved into a new period of progress. Today, the stated policy of the University is to make "E" stand for both Eastern and Excellence.



Eastern Michigan University Campus today.

An exciting and unique idea which eventually involved our entire community was proposed in 1963. At a small dinner party in their home, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Owens spoke to close friends about their idea of establishing a Greek Theatre in Ypsilanti. It was hoped that this unusual theatre would have national appeal and would help to establish Ypsilanti as a cultural center.

With full support of the Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce, City Council and the Industrial Development Corporation, the Greek Theatre was soon incorporated and began a fund-raising drive in 1964. A Chicago firm was chosen to draw up architectural plans, and a site in Riverside Park was granted by the city. A committee was selected to develop and landscape this site in connection with the Historical Walk planned for theatre patrons.



Mr. and Mrs. Bert Lahr are greeted at Depot Town station—1966. Mayor Susan Sayre presents Mr. Lahr with a "Key to the City" during welcoming ceremonies. On the left is John Mayhew, a Greek Theatre official from Ford Motor Company.

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Dame Judith Anderson is welcomed with flowers—1966. After a helicopter landing, Miss Anderson is officially greeted by Father John Kamelakis, Pastor of St. Nickolas Greek Orthodox Church in Ann Arbor.

Alexis Solomos, world-renowned director of the National Greek Theatre in Athens, Greece, was hired to direct Ypsilanti's Greek Theatre. He arrived here in the fall of 1965 to translate and write scripts, to cast the various roles, and to make all necessary arrangements.

Throughout the winter months, plans were finalized and fund-raising events were held. While Ypsilanti residents sought housing for the New York cast members, citizen groups in other Michigan cities held benefit dinners to help fund the theatre.

This page sponsored by WILLOUGHBY'S SHOES



Greek Theatre production of "The Birds"—1966.

When it became apparent that the building in Riverside Park could not be financed and built immediately, Mr. Solomos agreed to convert the baseball diamond at Eastern Michigan University into an authentic Greek Theatre. An elaborate stage was built, with two trailers set up for use as dressing rooms. Extensive outdoor landscaping around the theatre entrance created an appropriate setting for America's first Greek drama center.

The dream became a reality on Opening Nights, June 28th and 29th, 1966. The Greek Theatre's comedy production of *The Birds* starred the incomparable Bert Lahr. The dramatic leading lady of *The Oresteia* was one of the world's most distinguished actresses, Dame Judith Anderson, who also was one of the Greek Theatre's most ardent supporters.

The productions were declared a theatrical success, the stars were given rave reviews, and the Greek Theatre was highly acclaimed both nationally by critics and locally by

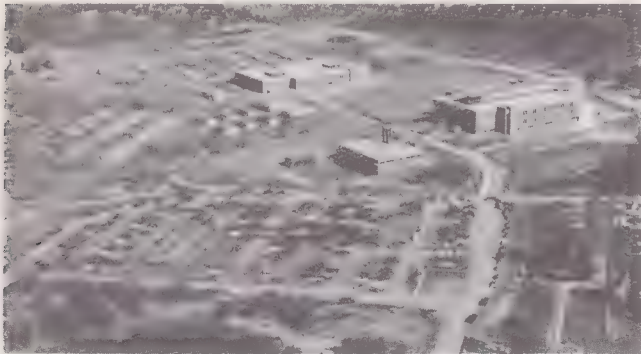
audiences. Performances were given six nights a week, alternating the two productions, except for two cancellations caused when the outdoor stage became water-soaked by summer rains.

As news of this unique theatre spread, people began coming to Ypsilanti from all over the country. Box-office sales increased in August, but the theatre's expenses had become overwhelming. The last performances were given in early September.

The following months were devoted to resolving the financial problems and to final committee meetings; the Greek Theatre Corporation was dissolved in the spring of 1968. But a dream had fostered community spirit and pride—the theatre world's most accomplished people had shared their talents and enthusiasms—Ypsilanti had achieved national recognition—and a small town had shown determination and dedication.

The voters of Washtenaw County approved the establishment of a publicly-supported, county-wide community college in January, 1965. In the fall, the Board of Trustees purchased a tract of land on East Huron River Drive between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. Educational specifications for the new campus were written, and construction work began.

In September, 1966, Washtenaw Community College enrolled over 1,200 students in a variety of technical, industrial and semiprofessional courses as well as college transfer and general education curriculums. Classes were held in various quarters until the Technical/Industrial Building was completed in 1969. Now the Exact Science Building is also in use, and enrollment has reached 4,000.



New buildings at Washtenaw Community College.

While some students at Washtenaw Community College have elected transfer and general education curriculums, about 60 percent are enrolled in over 70 different occupational programs. The College seeks to develop courses which meet the needs of students and provide the skills needed by area business, industry and governmental units.

From Ypsilanti's early days until the turn of the century, a remarkable cross section of 19th century American architecture developed here. These old structures illustrate a rich variety of architectural styles seldom found in a single community.

During the 1930's, the Federal Government surveyed thousands of old buildings throughout the United States to

determine which ones of historic or architectural value were important as national landmarks. Two structures in Ypsilanti, the Ladies' Literary Club House and the Ballard-Breakey House, were among those chosen to be photographed and documented for the Library of Congress.

The National Trust organization now estimates that 25 percent of America's historic or architecturally significant structures have been destroyed in one generation. So, in June of 1972, City Council appointed a Historic District Study Committee to consider the future of many old buildings in this area which still exist in unaltered condition.

In January, 1973, at the committee's request, City Council officially designated a 40-block area as a Historic District which contains numerous structures that are worthy of preservation. This Historic District actually includes over 185 significant buildings. Among them are City Hall, the Historical Museum, the Ballard-Breakey House, the Lewis House, the First Presbyterian Church and the Fire House.

In 1972, the Ladies' Literary Club House was the first building in Ypsilanti to be included on the National Register of Historic Sites. The entire Historic District now has been nominated for inclusion on the National Register; a decision is pending.

Historic Districts have been established in over 100 U.S. cities to safeguard their community heritage, to stabilize property values and to promote new growth. In the near future a protective ordinance will be proposed in Ypsilanti. Under this ordinance, a Historic District Commission would be formed to encourage the maintenance and continued use of the old buildings. In regaining their identities, these historic structures could be adapted for new use as offices, boutiques and specialty shops. The commission also would encourage new business and new construction which is compatible with the area.

Beside planning a special Historic District, Ypsilanti is studying possibilities for the redevelopment of the downtown area. Major changes, which might incorporate a mall concept, may be implemented in the coming years.



Ladies' Literary Club—built in the 1840's and known as the William H. Davis House.

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And Depot Town, Ypsilanti's oldest commercial and manufacturing district on East Cross Street, soon will witness the opening of an elegant restaurant in its neighborhood. The new restaurant will re-create 19th Century America by restoring the original Follett House Hotel. The lavish Follett House, opened in 1859, was considered one of the finest hotels on the Michigan Central Railway between Detroit and Chicago. It was the hub of glittering social events and theatrical performances until well into the 1880's. Perhaps these scenes will appear again in a rejuvenated Depot Town.

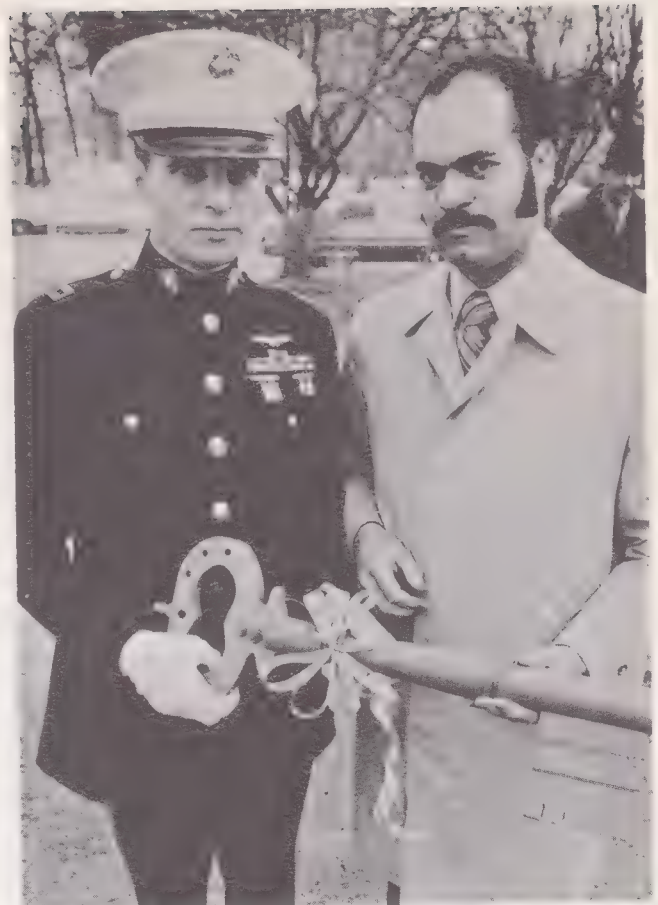
In this Sesquicentennial Year, Ypsilanti is beginning a two-year period of governmental change based on the adoption of a new City Charter. Since 1947, members of City Council have been elected from the city at large and have chosen the mayor from their number. On April 2, 1973, under the new charter, a ward-based council was elected by the voters, who also elected their mayor.

When the doors to the new Ypsilanti High School open this fall, the entire scope and concept of teaching will change. It is one of the most innovative schools in Michigan.



Ypsilanti High School—opening in September, 1973. Plans for the building were awarded a Special Citation at the 1971 Exhibition of School Architecture in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

After voters approved an \$11.9-million bond issue in the spring of 1969, plans were drawn up to build another traditional school with uniform classrooms along straight hallways. Then Superintendent of Schools Ray Barber and his assistants took a look at "open schools" in operation.



Ypsilanti's returning POW accepts a "Key to the City" from Mayor George D. Goodman—April, 1973. Capt. James Warner, who spent 5 ½ years in a North Vietnamese prison camp, was given a royal welcome by the community. Later, he received the Purple Heart, 2 Air Medals and 3 military citations.

Plans took a dramatic turn; an entirely different building concept emerged. The sprawling structure at Hewitt and Packard Roads now contains movable walls so teachers can combine classes for large lectures and divide space for small seminars. There are some 100 teacher "stations," complete with telephones, audio tapes and blackboards.

The 2,200 students entering the new high school in September, 1973, will be encouraged to combine different subjects in individual projects and to relate school work to everyday life. An expanded curriculum will offer a broad range of subjects to appeal to each individual student. Education in Ypsilanti will begin a new era.

The Ypsilanti Township Hall, completed this spring at 7200 Huron River Drive, consolidates all the township offices under one roof. The \$1.5-million building is the first phase of a Civic Center, which may one day include a recreation building, court facilities and a library. Approval has been given to construct a Vietnam War memorial in front of the hall to honor those from the township who died in Vietnam combat.



Ford Lake Regatta: National Inboard Hydroplane Races—1970.

Ford Motor Company deeded Ford Lake to the city and township of Ypsilanti after they formed the Joint Ypsilanti Recreation Organization (JYRO) in 1969. JYRO has begun a land-acquisition program and is developing acreage for recreational use. Planned improvements and construction eventually will provide facilities for numerous summer and winter activities for area residents of all ages.

Ford Lake is included in 900 square miles of lakes, rivers and drainage areas currently being studied by the Huron River Watershed Council. This advisory body is concerned with the environmental aspects and future use of the entire Huron River, its tributaries and its banks. The Watershed Council, whose present membership represents 26 units of government, is promoting ways to improve the water quality and use of the adjoining lands. The powerful Huron River—which lured the first settlers to Woodruff's Grove and

which encouraged and sustained industry, from the early mills to modern factories—is still one of our most vital assets.

Willow Run's skyrocketing growth, both residential and commercial, has been a primary force in the Ypsilanti Area's dynamic progress; it will play a major role in determining the future. Industry and business have profited by our human and natural resources; their successes have contributed to the area's advancement, and their expansions have stabilized the area's development. Ypsilanti, home of Eastern Michigan University, Cleary College and Washtenaw Community College, is an outstanding center for quality education; its new high school leads the way to tomorrow.

Our great heritage is a solid foundation on which to build for the years ahead. But the Ypsilanti Area's greatest wealth lies in the interest of civic organizations, the dedication of community volunteers, the enthusiasm of club groups, and the pride of local citizens. It is the people of today who assure Ypsilanti of an enriched future.

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